

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SS-07 NSC-06 AID-01 /024 W

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R 201926Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2923

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: SNAR OREP (WOLFF, LESTERL.)

SUBJECT: CODEL WOLFF VISIT TO COLOMBIA

REF: STATE 305734

1. CONGRESSMEN WOLFF AND GILMAN, ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR WIVES AND STAFF ASSISTANTS FOX AND DUSKIE VISITED BOGOTA JAN 14-17. THE VISIT WENT SMOOTHLY AND WE JUDGE THAT THE CONGRESSMEN CONSIDERED IT SUCCESSFUL. THEY SEEMED PARTICULARLY SATISFIED WITH THEIR CONVERSATIONS WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND PRESIDENT LOPEZ.

2. CODEL CONFERRED WITH FOREIGN MINISTER LIEVANO FOR AN HOUR, LARGELY ON THE SUBJECT OF NARCOTICS. THE CONGRESSMEN STRESSED THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE DRUG PROBLEM IN THE U.S. AND SAID THAT THEY WERE ANXIOUS TO LEARN WHAT MORE CAN BE DONE IN COLOMBIA IN OUR MUTUAL EFFORTS AGAINST THIS PROBLEM. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID GOC WAS DETERMINED TO DO EVERYTHING NECESSARY IN COMBATING NARCOTICS TRAFFIC AND ENVISAGED MOUNTING A LARGE-SCALE OPERATION UNDER A UNIFIED COMMAND. HE REPEATEDLY STRESSED HIS HOPE THAT USG WOULD HELP PROVIDE RESOURCES GOC WOULD NEED. THE CONGRESSMEN SAID THEY WERE HEARTENED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S EXPRESSION OF CONCERN AND DETERMINATION AND INDICATED THAT AMERICAN ASSISTANCE WOULD BE GIVEN TO EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS THAT COLOMBIANS WORKED OUT. IN A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF BROADER FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS,

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THE CONGRESSMEN EXPRESSED THEIR CONCERN ABOUT THE

FUTURE OF THE UN, AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER REITERATED COMMENTS HE HAD MADE EARLIER TO THE AMBASSADOR (75 BOGOTA 11776) ABOUT THE NEED FOR THE US TO EXTEND PREFERENTIAL ECONOMIC TREATMENT TO LATIN AMERICA.

3. FOLLOWING MEETING WITH LIEVANO, CODEL HAD AMIABLE 40-MINUTE CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT LOPEZ. MUCH THE SAME GROUND WAS COVERED IN DISCUSSING THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM. THE PRESIDENT PLEDGED FULL GOC EFFORTS AGAINST TRAFFICKING AND SAID THAT DURING HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON PRESIDENT FORD HAD PROMISED HELP SUPPLY RESOURCES GOC NEEDED, ESPECIALLY IN COMMUNICATIONS AND HELICOPTERS. CONGRESSMAN WOLFF ASSURED PRESIDENT LOPEZ THAT CONGRESS WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT PROVIDE THE AID GOC REQUIRES. DURING ENSUING DISCUSSION OF BROADER FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS, PRESIDENT LOPEZ REITERATED GOC'S INTEREST IN PURSUING ANTI-TERRORIST MEASURES THROUGH THE UN (BOGOTA 0528).

4. MEMCONS COVERING MEETINGS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AND PRESIDENT LOPEZ BEING POUCHED ARA/NA AND H. COPIES WERE GIVEN TO CODEL BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE.

5. PRIOR TO THEIR MEETINGS WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE PRESIDENT, THE CODEL WAS BRIEFED BY THE AMBASSADOR ON THE GENERAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION IN COLOMBIA AND BY THE EMBASSY'S NARCOTICS COORDINATOR ON JOINT USG-GOC NARCOTICS ENFORCMENT PROGRAMS. LATER, THE CODEL RECEIVED AN EXTENSIVE BRIEFING FROM DEA REGIONAL DIRECTOR LOUIS BACHRACH ON THE NARCOTICS CONTROL SITUATION IN SOUGHT AMERICA AS A WHOLE. ON JAN 16, DEA SAIC GONZALEZ ESCORTED CONGRESSMAN GILMAN ON A FOUR-HOUR VISIT TO CALI WHERE THEY MET WITH DEA AND COLOMBIAN POLICE OFFICIALS ENGAGED IN OPERATION KITCHEN. (THE CODEL CANCELLED THEIR MEETINGS WITH THE MINISTERS OF FINANCE AND JUSTICE).

6. AT THE END OF THEIR VISIT CODEL HELD USEFUL (AND UNEVENTFUL) PRESS CONFERENCE AND ISSUED NON-CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENT CONCERNING THE LATIN-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MANHATTAN" NARCOTICS TRAIL. AMONG OTHER THINGS STATEMENT POINTED OUT THAT COLOMBIA HAD BEEN UNFAIRLY LABELLED AS MAJOR "SOURCE" OF COCAINE WHEN IN FACT IT WAS A CROSS-ROADS FOR TRAFFIC ORIGINATING IN ECUADOR, BOLIVIA, PERU AND CHILE. (TEXT OF STATEMENT CABLED BY USIS JAN 16 TO USIA WITH INFO STATE ARA). STATEMENT EMPHASIZED THAT ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORT HAD BEEN GIVEN HIGH PRIORITY BY PRESIDENT FORD AND

IT APPEALED FOR THE SUPPORT AND COOPERATION OF THE
LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS THAT ARE BEING EXPLOITED BY
NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NARCOTICS, CODELS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BOGOTA00613
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760022-0404
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760139/aaaabijx.tel
Line Count: 119
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION H
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 305734
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 JUL 2004 by MartinML>; APPROVED <14 JUL 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CODEL WOLFF VISIT TO COLOMBIA
TAGS: SNAR, OREP, (WOLFF, LESTER L)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006